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MYTHIC CREATURES: SERPENTS, DRAGONS, AND SEA MONSTERS IN NORTHEASTERN ROCK ART

Edward J. Lenik

Serpentine images carved into non-portable rock surfaces and on portable artifacts were invested with ideological and cultural significance by American Indian people in the Northeast. These images occur on bedrock outcrops located along the shores of lakes, the banks of rivers, seaside bays, low hills and mountains. Serpentine images have also been engraved into utilitarian and non-utilitarian artifacts such as tools, ornaments, pebbles, and on small, flat stones. They appear on wood and bark, and as facial tattoos on an eighteenth century Mohican Indian and on a portrait of a Delaware Indian. These various images are described and an interpretation of their origin, age and meaning is presented.

INTRODUCTION

Serpentine images carved into non-portable rock surfaces and portable artifacts were invested with ideological and cultural significance by American Indian peoples in the Northeast. These images occur on bedrock outcrops located along the shores of lakes, rivers, seaside bays, low hills, and mountains. Serpentine images have also been engraved into utilitarian and non-utilitarian artifacts such as tools, ornaments, pebbles and other small flat stones. In addition, serpent figures were engraved in wood and bark, and appear as facial tattoos on an eighteenth-century Mohican Indian and a portrait of a Delaware Indian (Leland 1884; Dunn 2000; Kraft 2001).

According to ethnohistoric and ethnographic sources, serpents were portrayed as fish-tailed or horned monsters that represent, for Algonquian peoples, creatures of evil and darkness, but also as symbols of power. They were viewed as powerful manitous, the guardian spirit of many Indians whose horns signified its great power. These great serpents or water monsters often resided in caverns in mountains near lakes where underground passages connected these caverns to water (Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:94-95), in slimy mud banks and swamps, in lakes, on islands or among or inside rocks and boulders (Meurger 1988). The serpent is portrayed as the enemy of the Thunderbird. In 1637, Algonquian Indians told Jesuit Father LeJeune that "thunder is caused by the Thunderbirds vomiting up the serpent and lightning is the serpent falling or thrown to the ground" (Rajnovich 1994:107).

A snake is more unlike human beings than any other common animal in that it crawls on its belly. It has no legs or arms. Mammals, birds and amphibians are more human-like in form. A snake is at the far end of the animal spectrum from a human. They are the most Other of all creatures.

Snakes are lines. They are easily abstracted into zigzags and spirals. These two abstract images are easily found elsewhere in nature: waves, streambeds, and lightening are snake-like zigzags. Whirlpools, tornados, and young ferns are spirals.

We see a range of snake/serpent images in rock art. Abstract zigzags and spirals, representational zoomorphic images and fanciful creatures that combine snakelike features with other features, most commonly horns, feet and mammal-like heads that breathe fire have been found on non-portable and portable petroglyphs. Pictographs or paintings on rock surfaces are extremely rare in the Northeast. Only four sites have been found and documented in this region, two sites in Maine and two in New York, but none of these contain serpent images (Lenik 2002:64-66; 195-198).

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SERPENTINE PETROGLYPHS IN SOUTHEASTERN CANADA

The serpent has an important position in the mythology of many northeastern American Indian tribes. At Kejimkujik Lake in Nova Scotia, Canada, for example, there are thirty-three snake and snake-like images incised into large reddish-brown slate outcrops on the shore of the lake (Committee for the Kejimkujik Petroglyphs 1994:23). In addition, there are two figures of Jipijka'm, a horned serpent who was said to live underwater (Figure 1). These latter two images are located at the Fairy Bay and Mill Bay petroglyph loci on the lake (Molyneaux 1984).

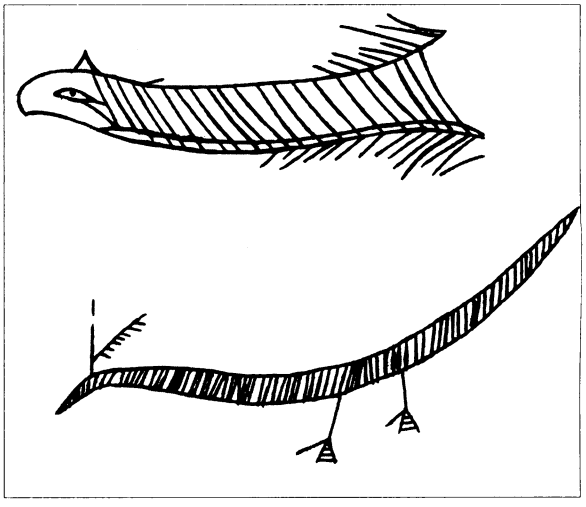

Figure 1. Two images of Jipijka'm a horned serpent located on rock outcrops on Kejimkujik Lake, Nova Scotia. Drawing by T. Fitzpatrick after Robertson 1973 and Molyneaux 1983, 1984.

Among the many snake images at Kejimkujik Lake is an incised figure of a human who has fallen from a canoe and is being carried away by a horned serpent (Molyneaux 1988). Sailing vessels linked to serpents are also present at the lake. A schooner-serpent glyph with "distinctive cross hatching" and likely made by one individual is present on a rock near the lake. Other examples include a horned serpent associated with a shallop or sloop, and a Mi'kmaq sea-going canoe containing two human figures floats next to a snake. These glyphs suggest that the Indians were fearful of the spirits who lived beneath the water and they must be shown respect because they could disturb the water and cause storms (Molyneaux 1985:6-11).

In one Mi'kmaq story, the snake or serpent has a large head and crystal-like eyes that are very powerful medicine. Snakes were considered to be messengers to the underworld who inspired fear and respect in Indian people. The serpent was a powerful spirit and may represent the "teomul" (spirit-helper) which a Mi'kmaq Indian received during a vision quest. When a Mi'kmaq saw his teomul in the form of a serpent, it meant that he was destined to become a medicine man or shaman (Parks Canada n.d.:20).

Marion Robertson (1973) in her book, *Rock Drawings of the Micmac Indians*, wrote that two serpents guard the entrance to the country of Gluscap, the culture hero, where he resides. They "flick their tongues across the misty entrance to his land."

According to Mi'kmaq legends, the horned snake was a "monstrous" creature that could become the size and shape of a mountain. Its horns were red or yellow which gave immense power to an Indian who possessed one. If the horns were attached to the forehead of an enemy, it could not be removed. As the creature continued to grow, it wound itself around a tree and its helpless victim. The horn could not be broken except by encircling it with a line of red ochre which would snap it off and free the victim (Robertson 1973, Figure 8).

In other tales of this supernatural creature, a hunter follows the trail of the Jipijka'mi'skw, a female horned serpent. The hunter changes into a Jipijka'm himself and follows her into the "World Beneath the Water" where he is to become her husband. However, a "puoin," a shaman, rescues the hunter when the two of them come out of the water. One of them wraps itself around the tree where the shaman awaits. The shaman cuts its head off and pulls out the entire body of the hunter. In another story, a woman marries a beautiful Jipijka'm who came out of the water in a spring. They have a child and decide to return to the "World Under the Water." The man, woman and child become Horned Serpent persons and enter the world under the water, never to return (Whitehead 1988:44-47).

In the late 1600s, the Mi'kmaqs had a snake dance performed only by women during which the women were described by a Catholic priest as "looking intently at the earth, they writhed and twisted and hissed

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through their lips like serpents." Snake or serpent glyphs are also found in association with sailing ship images which suggests that traditional Mi'kmaq religious concepts persisted well into the historic period despite the aggressive conversion efforts of the Roman Catholic Church (Molyneaux 1985:9).

The Peterborough Petroglyph site in Ontario, Canada contains more than 300 beautifully engraved identifiable images plus several hundred more eroded but still visible glyphs. The petroglyphs are pecked and ground into a large outcrop of white crystalline limestone which is criss-crossed by several seams and crevices of varying depth. An underground stream or watercourse was once present beneath the largest and deepest of the crevices (Vastokas 2004:280; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:8, 9). The site is situated inland on the southern edge of the Canadian Shield within Petroglyph Provincial Park.

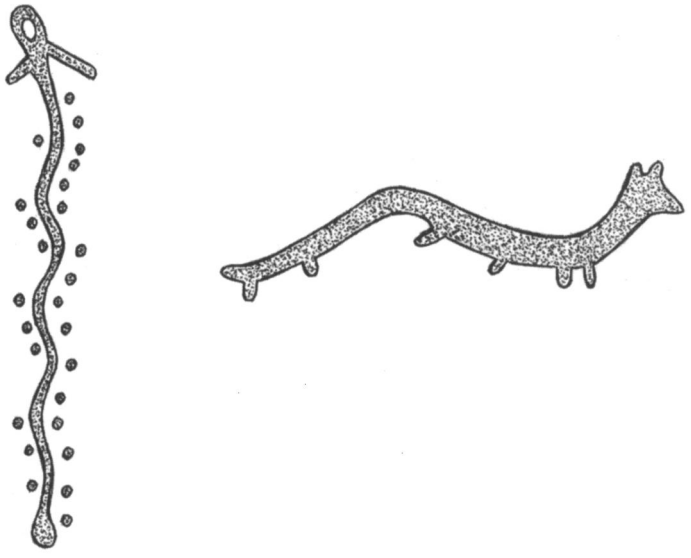

Figure 2. Great Horned Serpent images at the Peterborough Petroglyph site. Ontario. Drawing by T. Fitzpatrick after Vastokas and Vastokas 1975.

There are 29 serpent glyphs at the Peterborough Petroglyph site including one Great Horned Serpent and four horned snakes (Figure 2). These serpentine creatures seem to emerge from the crevices in the limestone. One snake figure which is over 11 feet long is crossed by one of the crevices which suggests to a viewer that the monster snake crawled across the surface of the rock. Another unusual serpentine glyph at the site consists of two intertwined and curving snakes with an overall length of seven feet. Vastokas and Vastokas (1973:14, 48, 95-102) point out that rocky hills and outcroppings with unusual dimensions or character such as crevices were especially charged with spiritual energy or manitou and often conceived as the dwelling place of mythological creatures.

The Horned Serpent illustrated in Figure 2 has horns that extend backwards from the side of its head. Twenty-four to 26 small holes or cupules parallel both sides of the creature's undulating or curvilinear body that terminates in a flat broad tail. It is interesting to note the similarity between this glyph and the Serpent Mounds, a Middle Woodland period site, which is located near the north shore of Rice Lake about 40 kilometers (25 miles) south of Peterborough. The Serpent Mounds at Rice Lake is a burial mound 59 meters (200 feet) long that is undulating and snake-like in plan view. Nearby are eight oval-shaped burial mounds often referred to as "eggs" (Anonymous n.d. 1-2). Vastokas and Vastokas (1973:100) observed that at Peterborough the snake is "pre-eminently a manitou of the underworld who.....is depicted as emerging from his abode."

Frelighsburg, one of the Eastern Townships in the Province of Quebec, lies in a lush green valley along the Brochets River and extends to the base of Mount Pinnacle; the town is near the United States-Vermont border. In April 1995, two fascinating petroglyphs were discovered at the top of Mount Pinnacle. Carved into the top surface of exposed bedrock was the unmistakable image of a dragon. It has a curved body with an apparent inscription along its length and a horse-like head (Figure 3). To the right of the dragon is a rake or comb-like figure that has been described as a "stylized rowboat." The glyphs reportedly exhibited "well-developed weathering" and were covered with lichen to some extent (Leduc 2000:37-38).

Who carved these remarkable images, when and what do they mean? Gerard Leduc (2000:38) has suggested that these carvings were of "Viking inspiration" and appeared to be similar to Viking stone monuments in Scandinavia. The inscription, consisting of 11 letters that extend along the dragon's body,

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Figure 3. Carved figure of a dragon and boat on Mount Pinnacle, Frelighsburg Township, Quebec. Photo courtesy of Gerard Leduc.

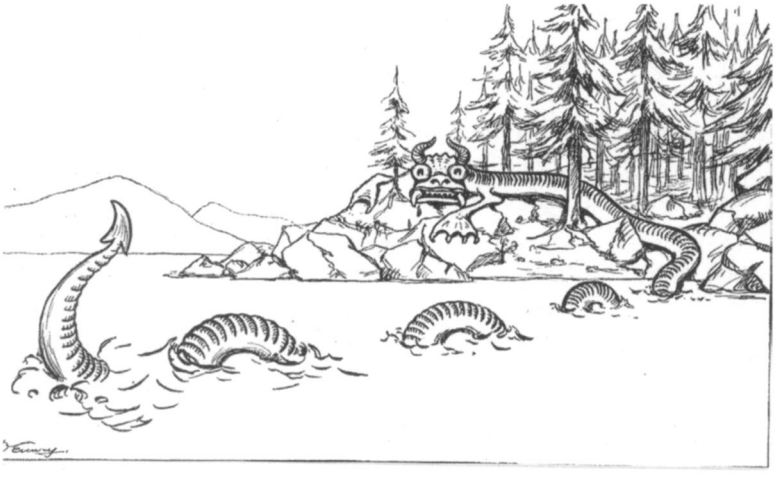

Figure 4. The Sea Serpent of Lake Memphremagog. Source: Merrill 1917.

appeared to represent Norse runes. Leduc consulted several linguistic scholars regarding the meaning of the inscription who reported to him that the letters were runes but no meaning or translation could be discerned. One of Leduc's informants, a Dr. Larsson, reported that the "dragon head (was) different from other Viking age" petroglyphs, and that the supposed boat was not of Viking origin. Larsson concluded that the petroglyphs were of recent origin made by someone imitating Scandinavian figures.

The location of the Frelighsburg dragon petroglyph with its horse head-style head is part of the cultural tradition of lake monster sightings in the Eastern Townships of Quebec and adjacent Lake Champlain in northern New York and Vermont. References to various types of lake monsters are numerous in American Indian and Euro-American legends. Sightings of lake monsters have been reported in Lake Aylmer, Lake Saint Francois, Moffat Lake, Lake Williams, Lake Breeches, Lake Memphremagog, Lake Massawippi, Lake Brompton, and Lake Pohe'ne'gamook in southern Quebec, and Lake Champlain in the United States (Meurger 1988). Two examples of lake serpent legends from the Frelighsburg region are presented here.

Lake Memphremagog is located partly in Quebec and partly in Vermont. It lies approximately 48 kilometers (30 miles) to the east of Frelighsburg and is 51 kilometers (32 miles) long, of which 22 kilometers (14 miles) are in Vermont. Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the region surrounding the lake was occupied by Abenaki Indians who gave the lake its name, which means "beautiful waters." Lake Memphremagog is extensively steeped in creature legends. Here, the lake monster has been variously described as a horned serpent, a big fish, a seal, a living log, and a horse head serpent (Meurger 1988:85, 87, 117). The description and portrayal of a horse head serpent in the tales and legends is remarkably similar to the dragon petroglyph on Mount Pinnacle in Frelighsburg.

In 1816, Ralph Merry, IV, a resident of Magog, Quebec (located at the northern end of Lake Memphremagog) recorded in his diary four accounts of serpent sightings on the lake. One of these accounts, reported by three individuals, stated that the creature was 20 to 30 feet long and had a head and neck that looked like a horse (Figure 4).

According to William B. Bullock (1938), the tradition of an enormous lake serpent originated with the Abenaki Indians. Bullock wrote that "they were quite terrified.....(and) dared not swim (in) the lake for fear of being devoured by the monster."

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One of the earliest published references to the lake monster dates to 1847 when a local newspaper, the *Stanstead Journal*, reported that a "strange animal, something of a sea-serpent.....exists in Lake Memphremagog" (Merrill 1917). Owl's Head, a granite mountain on the western shore of Lake Memphremagog, overlooks a deep hole in the lake. This abyss is said to be the home of the "horse-serpent of the Indians." (Meurger 1988:87).

Lake Massawippi, located about 15 kilometers (9.4 miles) to the east of Lake Memphremagog, also has a serpent legend. The lake's name is attributed to the Abenaki Indians and means "deep water." According to tradition, there is a rock on the shore of the lake known as "Donda" on which at one time was skillfully carved in bold relief the head of an Indian with a serpent coiled around its neck (Meurger 1988:89). The passage of time and the effects of weather are said to have erased this sculpture from Donda Rock.

Finally, several reported tales link the lake monsters with canoes and their occupants. For example, a monster reportedly swallowed a canoe on Lake Memphremagog, overturned a canoe in Lake Saint Jean, and attacked a canoe on Lake Pohe'ne'gamook (Meurger 1988:86-87, 100, 236). Also, the boat glyph on Pinnacle Mountain is very similar to those found at the Peterborough Petroglyph site in Ontario, Canada and in Great Lakes rock art sites (see Vastokas and Vastokas 1973:121-123).

In summary, I conclude that the dragon and boat petroglyphs on Mount Pinnacle in Frelighsburg were carved in post-Historic Contact times, most likely by an individual familiar with and in imitation of the lake monster stories of the region.

SERPENTINE PETROGLYPHS IN NEW ENGLAND

There are five non-portable rock art sites in the State of Maine. Petroglyphs, or rock carvings, occur on tide-washed rock outcroppings at Machias Bay on the north-east coast and on rock ledges on Grand Lake Stream and the Kennebec River inland. Pictographs or paintings have been found and recorded on vertical cliffs along the shores of two inland lakes. These rock art sites appear to be the work of spiritual leaders or shamans of Algonquian-speaking peoples who historically occupied this region (Lenik 2002).

Figure 5. Serpent anthropomorph at Machias Bay, Maine. Drawing courtesy of Mark Hedden.

There are nine petroglyph loci along the shore and on islands in Machias Bay. These sites contain the highest concentration of petroglyphs on the east coast of the United States (Hedden 2002:1). Located near the center of the main ledge at Birch Point at Machiasport is a serpent anthropomorph with lines extending from its head (Figure 5). This image was pecked into the rock surface, has three somewhat angular zigzags along its body, and measures 38 centimeters (15 inches) long. The image, with both its snake and human components, suggests a form of spiritual metamorphosis (Hedden 1988:7). This glyph dates to the late Middle Woodland and early Late Woodland-Ceramic periods, circa 1100 B.P.– 600 B.P.

A horned serpent glyph is present on a slate bedrock outcrop located in Machias Bay. This image was among more than 50 petroglyphs found on the ledge; the site is listed as Maine Archaeological Survey site 62.46. Mark Hedden (2002:13) described the glyph as follows: "On the upper part of panel (Ledge 1, panel 7A) is a single figure in a canoe, more deeply pecked.....The canoe has a snake-like shape rising from one end; and the canoe and snake are continuous.....The petroglyph seems to refer to a water-monster such as the horned snake or Appodumken, whose victims meet with disasters during travel on water." Hedden suggests the canoe-serpent glyph dates to the Historic period. Hedden's description is reminiscent of the tales of lake monsters attacking canoes on Lake Memphremagog, Lake Saint John, and Lake Pohe'ne'gamook in Quebec discussed earlier.

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Figure 6. Snake glyph at Grand Lake Stream, Maine. Source: Ray 1992.

Figure 7. Incised figures on birch bark representing the "Woman Who Loved a Serpent" myth attributed to Tomah Joseph, Passamaquoddy. Source: Leland 1884.

Grand Lake Stream is both a watercourse and a town of the same name in Washington County, Maine. Grand Falls or Big Falls is located a short distance below the village. Above the falls on the east side of the stream is a flat, slightly sloping outcrop of bedrock that extends into the stream. In 1988, a number of incised petroglyphs were found on this ledge. Additional glyphs were subsequently discovered on a rock ledge south and downstream from the first location, and on a rock surface in the stream itself.

At Locus 2 below the falls is the pecked image of a snake (Figure 6). It is 25 centimeters (10 inches) long and has a large head and open mouth. The snake is pecked into the ledge among crevices and holes which suggests that it emerged from the underworld (Ray 1992:4-5). I suggest that this pecked representation of a snake is most likely older than the incised designs at Grand Lake Stream that were carved by traditional Passamaquoddy shamans in the mid-nineteenth century.

In the late nineteenth century, Tomah Joseph, a Passamaquoddy Indian of Pleasant Point, Maine, illustrated a tribal legend known as "the woman who loved a serpent" by realistically incising these two figures on birch bark (Figure 7). Here we have a serpent glyph carved into a new artistic medium to communicate a tribal story. According to Charles G. Leland (1884:273-274), this story is one of several versions that feature "At-O-Sis, the Serpent":

Of the Woman who loved a Serpent who lived in a Lake
(Passamaquoddy)

> There was a very beautiful woman. She turned the heads of all the men. She married, and her husband died very soon after, but she immediately took another. Within a single year she had five husbands, and these were the cleverest and handsomest and bravest in the tribe. And then she married again. This, the sixth, was such a silent man that he passed for a fool. But he was wiser than people thought. He came to believe, by thinking it over, that this woman had some strange secret. He resolved to find it out. So he watched her all the time. He kept his eye on her by night and by day.
>
> It was summer, and she proposed to go into the woods to pick berries, and to camp there. By and by, when they were in the forest, she suggested that he should go on to the spot

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where they intended to remain and build a wigwam. He said that he would do so. But he went a little way into the woods and watched her. As soon as she believed that he was gone, she rose and walked rapidly onwards. He followed her, unseen. She went on, till, in a deep, wild place among the rocks, she came to a pond. She sat down and sang a song. A great foam, or froth, rose to the surface of the water. Then in the foam appeared the tail of a serpent. The creature was of immense size. The woman, who had laid aside all her garments, embraced the serpent, which twined around her, enveloping all her limbs and body in his folds. The husband watched it all. He now understood that, the venom of the serpent having entered the woman, she had saved her life by transferring it to others, who died. He went on to the camping ground and built a wigwam. He made up two beds; he built a fire. His wife came. She was earnest that there should be only a single bed. He sternly bade her lie by herself. She was afraid of him. She laid down, and went to sleep. He arose three times during the night to replenish the fire. Every time he called her, and there was no answer. In the morning he shook her. She was dead. She had died by the poison of the serpent. They sunk her in the pond where the snake lived.

The Embden petroglyph site is located on the west bank of the Kennebec River in the Town of Embden, Somerset County, Maine. A ledge of bedrock composed of shale extends perpendicularly out into the river and has more than one hundred designs pecked or incised into its south-facing surface.

A serpent is depicted at the eastern end of the ledge (Figure 8). Roslyn Strong (1998:38-43) of the New England Antiquities Research Association has characterized this figure as a dragon with a "horse-type head with horns, two sets of legs and a clear arrow at the end of the tail." Strong suggests that this glyph represents a Glooscap story in which the Algonquian culture hero killed a dragon on the Kennebec River. Her interpretation is based on the following story related by Joseph Nicolar in 1893 in his book, *The Life and Traditions of the Red Man* (Nicolar 1893:40-41):

Figure 8. Rubbing of serpent figure at the Embden, Maine petroglyph site. Courtesy of Roslyn Strong.

[U]pon returning to his people from his work by way of the sea he [Klose-kur-beh, or Glooscap] found the waters very dark in color and the stench of it was great, because there had been a great calm over all the sea, following the destruction of the "Par-sar-do-kep-piart," - Mammoth, and the dancing of the "Nee-bur-bann," - Northern lights, consequently the waters became stagnant and foul. And as he moved along he saw a serpent at a long distance, as it lay on the surface of the dark water. Upon nearing the monster, it raised its head and began to run out its fir-like tongue rapidly at him; by this action he was well aware that this was another deadly enemy, so he steered his canoe directly for the monster and the serpent reared up in fearful manner and seemed to crush the canoe and the man, but at that moment "May-May," - "Red headed wood pecker" flew between the man and the serpent and danced in the air for awhile, seemed undecided which way to fly until it saw the serpent make for the man, then the bird flew toward the man and lit upon the bow end of the canoe and said to him, "Be quick and take your bow and shoot the arrow at the smallest part of the reptile's body," and Klose-kur-beh obeyed the bird and shot the arrow but it only rebounded without doing the intended execution, and the bird flew, picked up and brought back the arrow saying "Aim nearer the tail," the arrow went again only to rebound as before. Six times this was repeated and

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> six times met with the same results, but on the seventh, the bird flew in advance of the arrow and with its beak pointed to Klose-kur-beh whereto aim, Klose-kur-beh obeyed and sent the arrow swiftly to the spot very near the end of the tail; this broke the serpent's back bone, which caused him to recoil in death.

Much of the rock art of Maine appears to be the work of shamans. The discovery of the petroglyphs at Grand Lake Stream on the Passamaquoddy Indian Reservation, provides clear evidence that the shamanistic practice of making petroglyphs continued at least up to the middle of the nineteenth century (Hedden 2004:319). One of the best examples of the shamanistic tradition is a story related by Fanny Hardy Eckstorm (1945) in her book, *Old John Neptune and Other Maine Stories*. John Neptune, a Penobscot m'teoulino or shaman, fought a great battle with an underwater monster known as Wiwil'me'cq, who was a Mi'kmaq shaman, at Boyden's Lake located near the Passamaquoddy Reservation in Perry, Maine. During the battle they churned up the water of the lake to such an extent that it remains disturbed today. John Neptune was victorious and killed his enemy. There are several versions of this story but this summary captures the essential elements of the tale (see Eckstorm 1945:39-48).

Serpent glyphs on non-portable surfaces and on portable artifacts have not been found in Vermont and New Hampshire. The reason for this is unclear; it may be that such images are not recognized or are seen as minor features at archaeological sites and thus remain unreported. Another reason may simply be survey bias, since a comprehensive review of museum and private collections or extensive field investigations has not been undertaken.

In 1794, Indian petroglyphs were found and reported on the West River in Brattleboro, Vermont. Various reports and illustrations of these glyphs including those of Samuel Williams (1794), Edward A. Kendall (1809), Henry R. Schoolcraft (1857), Benjamin Hall (1858) and the photographs of Edward Hitchcock (1860s) differ in the type and number of design elements that were present on the rock. In 1858, Benjamin Hall reported and illustrated the presence of two snake glyphs at the site. Unfortunately, these figures were not reported nor illustrated by any of the other investigators cited above. Hall's purported snakes may be nothing more than two oblique lines which appear on Hitchcock's photograph of the rock.

The Brattleboro site, known as Indian Rock, is no longer visible. A hydroelectric dam was built on the Connecticut River at Vernon, Vermont that raised the water level above the dam including the lower end of the West River which flooded the petroglyph site. Thus, a field check of the petroglyph site is not possible at the present time.

Petroglyphs are also present on a rock situated in the middle of the Browns River in the Town of Jericho, Chittenden County, Vermont. Here, designs were pecked into the rock such as an arrow, triangular figures, possible wigwams, possible stick figures, animal tracks, abstract symbols, and a snake. My identification of these designs was subjective because many of the glyphs were water-worn and difficult to see. Hence, my identification of the snake glyph must be considered as tentative and problematical.

Dighton Rock, with its enigmatic carvings, was originally located on the east bank of the Taunton River in Berkley, Massachusetts. In 1963, the rock was moved from its original site and subsequently enclosed within a building that is now the Dighton Rock Museum in Dighton Rock State Park. Dighton Rock was a natural billboard located on a major inland waterway. Indians occupied this area for thousands of years prior to the coming of Europeans.

In my study of Dighton Rock, I concluded that the petroglyphs on the rock were produced by Indians (Lenik 2002:129-134). Among the numerous pecked images on the rock are anthropomorphic beings, zoomorphic figures, female genitalia, abstract and geometric symbols, and serpent-like glyphs. The latter figures consist of curving or undulating lines (see for example Delabarre 1928:Figures 6, 10, 16, 21, 22), but their identification as snakes or serpents is problematical.

Archaeological excavations at the Titicut site in Bridgewater, Massachusetts at the upper end of the Taunton River resulted in the discovery of a remarkable incised stone slab in a datable cultural feature. This feature consisted of a fire hearth below which was a flat stone lying horizontally and forming a cover over

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three elongated flat stones that were placed on edge at right angles to each other to form a box or cist. In the cist, the excavators found a full-grooved axe, a plummet, and a white quartz scraper all covered with red ochre. The underside of the cover stone contained three incised figures that were covered by a layer of graphite (Figure 9). The most prominent figure is a serpent with an open mouth, protruding tongue, an eye, and a curving body decorated with cross-hatched lines. The creature appears to be depicted in a threatening manner as suggested by its open mouth, extended tongue, and active posture. Below the serpent is a human figure and a sun or star symbol. The archaeological feature above the cist, a hearth, was dated to the Late Archaic period (Fowler 1966:43-44; Robbins 1967:33-76).

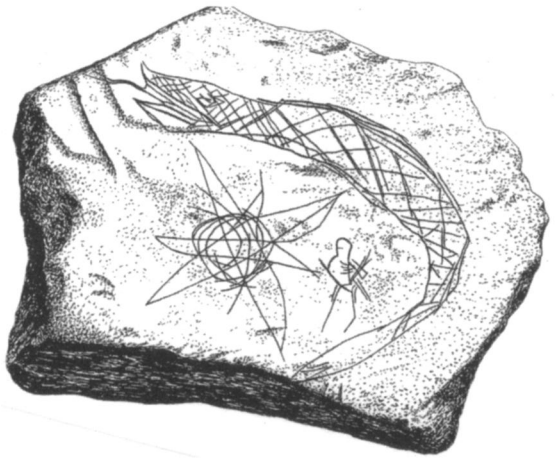


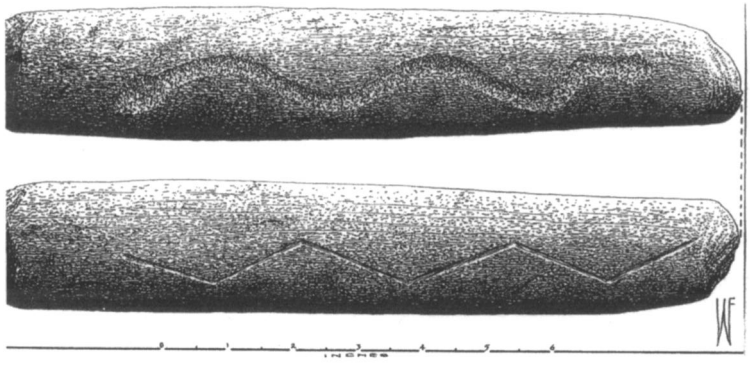
Figure 9. Incised serpent, sun or star symbol and human figures on a flat stone recovered from the Titicut site, Bridgewater, Massachusetts. Drawing by William Fowler 1966. Courtesy of Massachusetts Archaeological Society.

The association of the cover stone, with its three glyphs facing down into the box or cist, the contents of which appear to be a cremation burial, suggests a religious or ceremonial function for the petroglyphs. Perhaps the serpent depicted on the stone slab symbolizes its function as a guardian that accompanies the soul of the deceased, illustrated by the human figure, to the land of the spirits in the sky as suggested by the sun or star glyph.

Beaver Pond, a man-made body of water located in the Town of Franklin in southeastern Massachusetts, is surrounded by a large wetland area. Mine Brook flows through the marshland located to the north of the pond and enters the Charles River which flows past the marshes on the east side of the pond. Several plateaus, knolls, and ridges border the wetlands; these geophysical features have been favorite areas of exploitation by relic collectors for decades. Hundreds of artifacts such as projectile points, chipped stone tools, ground, pecked and polished stone tools have been collected from various loci around the pond. The analysis of several private collections has shown that Indian peoples have occupied these areas from the Early Archaic period (ca. 9000 years B.P.) to the Late Woodland (Ceramic) period (ca. 400 years B.P.) (Strauss 1990:15-33).

In 1966, an unusual stone pestle was brought to the Bronson Museum in Attleboro, Massachusetts by a member of the State society for study and analysis (Figure 10). The pestle was found by him during his excavation of a site on an elevation overlooking Beaver Pond. The pestle measured 30.5 centimeters (12 inches) in length, about 5 centimeters (2 inches) in diameter and was made from sandstone. Use-wear was evident on both ends of the pestle. This tool was reportedly found in subsoil, just below the topsoil, standing in an upright position, a most unusual occurrence.

Figure 9. Incised serpent, sun or star symbol and human figures on a flat stone recovered from the Titicut site, Bridgewater, Massachusetts. Drawing by William Fowler 1966. Courtesy of Massachusetts Archaeological Society.



One side of the pestle contains a pecked image of a serpent or snake, probably a rattlesnake, with a well-formed head, body, and tail that was thought to resemble its rattle. On the opposite side of the pestle is an incised and very well-made chevron-like design with five points. The pestle probably dates to the Woodland (Ceramic) period

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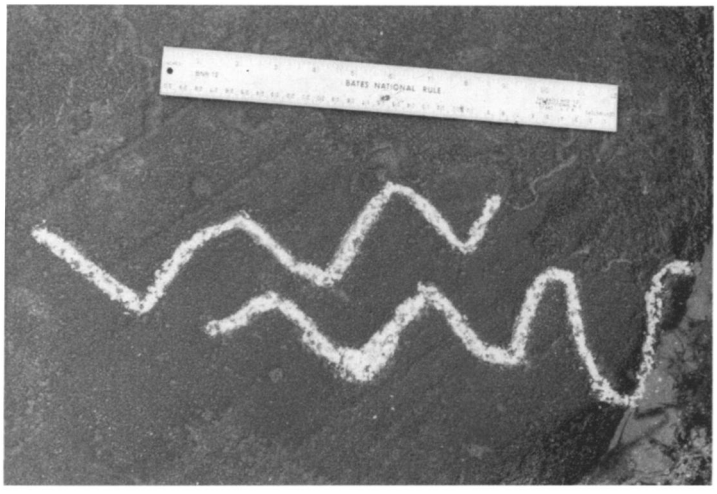

Figure 11. Pecked zigzag glyphs on Mark Rock, Warwick, Rhode Island representing snakes or serpents. Photo courtesy of Charles Devine, 1979.

(Fowler 1969-1970:26-27). The two distinct methods of producing these images on the same tool is also highly unusual.

What do the two designs on the Beaver Pond pestle mean? Michael A. Volmar (1994:15-23) in his study of effigy pestles recovered from sites in Massachusetts, concluded that such tools are frequently associated with women in Algonquian folklore. Women served their communities as food producers and processors and at times as spiritual leaders. In Algonquian mythology, all things such as flora, fauna, rocks, possessed spiritual power. This suggests that the Beaver Pond pestle with its images was likewise possessed with manitou or spiritual power and was likely owned by a woman.

Hobbamock, a principal Algonquian deity, appeared to Indians in visions and dreams, and at night in woods and swamps in the shape of humans, animals, inanimate objects, and mythical creatures (Simmons 1986:39). Volmar (1994:18), quoting from a 1649 account by Edward Winslow, a Puritan, noted that "Hobbamock appeared in a variety of forms...but most ordinarily a snake." Perhaps the Beaver Pond pestle was infused with spiritual power by Hobbamock, and which could have been used by an Indian woman in soliciting a bountiful harvest or food supply.

The chevron design on the pestle is problematical. Perhaps it, too, represents a snake but was carved in a conventional or stylistic manner.

Mark Rock, so named because of the numerous figures and symbols carved on it surface, is situated within a small sheltered cove on the west side the Narragansett Bay in the Town of Warwick, Rhode Island. In the seventeenth century, an Indian band called the Pawtuxets occupied this area of Rhode Island. The Pawtuxet were allies and tributaries of the Narragansett tribe who occupied all of western Rhode Island.

Mark Rock is actually several irregular ledges some 22 meters (74 feet) in length parallel to the shore and about 15 meters (50 feet) in width. These ledges slope gently from the land toward the water. The rock surfaces are flat to slightly convex, worn smooth and are washed daily by the tides. There are at least 12 loci containing glyphs at the site.

In 1978 and 1979, my colleague Charles Devine of Warwick and myself periodically visited the site, searched for, and recorded the extant glyphs. We found numerous pecked images including several anthropomorphic figures, a sun symbol, five connected circles each with an interior pit, spiral-like designs, a flower-like pattern, a female genitalia (vulva), two parallel zigzag lines, names, dates and initials.

I concluded that the anthropomorphs, circles, vulva, and zigzag glyphs are the oldest at the site because they occur on lower elevations on the rock surface which suggests that such areas were first exposed prior to sea level rise. These glyphs were produced at some time during the Woodland (Ceramic) period. The most recent petroglyphs such as the flowers, the spiral-like designs, a colonial-era pipe-smoking human head with tricorn hat occur on higher ledge surfaces closer to the present shoreline and date to the Historic Contact period (Lenik 2002:143-146).

I interpret the two pecked zigzag lines as representing snakes or serpents (Figure 11). These glyphs are located near and perpendicular to the water's edge. They each measure 30.5 centimeters (12 inches) in length. They appear to have an active appearance and seem to be moving (left to right in Figure 11) and emerging from the water in the bay. The lower figure is in the lead and has a small head.

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A pendant containing a carved image of a snake has also been found in the Narragansett Bay drainage. The pendant has a conical hole for suspension and measures 46 millimeters (1¾ inches) in length and 35 millimeters (1⅝ inches) in width. The snake has a spiral-like body and a head with indications of two eyes (Figure 12). The snake portrayed on this pendant is beautifully carved, symmetrically placed on the stone and reflects the fine skill of the Indian artist.

Figure 12. Pendant containing a carved image of a snake found in Narragansett Bay area. Drawing by William Fowler 1966. Courtesy of Massachusetts Archaeological Society.

A decorated atlatl or spear thrower weight having a "whale tail" or winged form was found in Hartford, Connecticut. Three incised figures appear on one side of this tool specimen (Figure 13). On the left is a zoomorphic figure that has crown-like triangles on its head, a neck and chest, suggesting a serpent was the intended image. On the right is a recognizable long-legged bird, possibly representing a shore bird. In the middle is a bi-pointed image that appears to be a feather; it has an interior line extending longitudinally from point to point with several short oblique lines that extend to each side. This artifact most likely dates to the Archaic culture period.

Another snake effigy was recovered from a shell midden site located in southwestern Connecticut. This specimen is a black elongated pebble that measures 7 centimeters (2¾ inches) in length. A horizontal incised line extends around the narrow end of the pebble forming the mouth of this reptile (Figure 14). A horizontal slit is present above the mouth line on both sides representing eyes. Two deeply carved perpendicular grooves encircle the pebble at the middle and back end of the stone. Finally, there appears to be a knob-like feature at the thicker end of the artifact. This knob, together with the grooves, suggest to me that a rattlesnake was the intended portrayal.

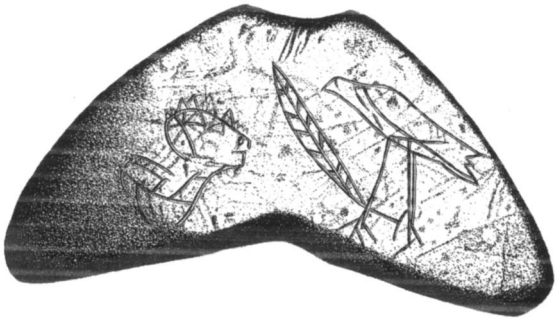

Figure 13. Spear thrower weight containing incised figures of a serpent, feather and a bird found in Hartford, Connecticut. Drawing by T. Fitzpatrick.

In 1928, two southern New England folktales regarding snakes were recorded by Gladys Tantaguidgeon, a Mohegan medicine woman and anthropologist. One story speaks of a boulder that is full of holes located on Snake Hill that was covered with snakes. One of these snakes was large and had a crescent on top if its head. The second tale states that blacksnakes could be detected by their smell and driven away by tobacco smoke. Another tale, related by Pearl Ryan, said that an "old Indian woman" living on Gay Head on the island of Marthas Vineyard in southeastern Massachusetts "drove away blacksnakes with pipe smoke" (Simmons 1986:284). In historic times, this area was Wampanoag Indian country.

Figure 14 (right). Serpent effigy on a pebble from southeastern Connecticut. Photo courtesy of Ernest A. Weigand.

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SERPENTINE PETROGLYPHS IN NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

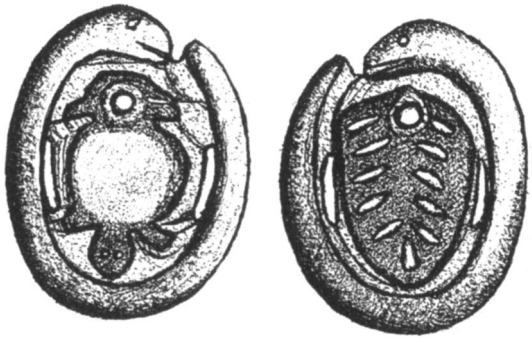

Figure 15. Pendant with carved figure of a snake around a turtle from Flint Mine Hill, Coxsackie, New York. Drawing by T. Fitzpatrick.

Southeastern New York, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, and Delaware was once the home of Algonquian-speaking peoples. Among the several tribal groups residing in this region historically were the Lenape or Delaware Indians whose territory extended across all of New Jersey, southeastern New York including western Long Island, eastern Pennsylvania and northern Delaware. To the north along the upper Hudson River Valley were the Mahican/Mohican Indians, while in eastern Long Island were the Unquachog, Corchaug, Shinnecock and Montauk. The Nanticoke and several related tribes occupied portions of the Delmarva Peninsula (Trigger 1978:ix; Salwen 1978:161; Feest 1978:241).

Flint Mine Hill, a prehistoric multi-component chert quarry, is located in the upper Hudson River Valley near the Town of Coxsackie in Greene County, New York. The hill, situated about four miles west of the Hudson River, is more than 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) long and 270 meters (900 feet) wide. The hill consists of numerous outcrops of chert and siliceous shale that was quarried by Indian people for 11,000 years (Brumback and Weinstein 1999:1-2). Flint Mine Hill was a vast industrial complex consisting of numerous quarry pits, quarry and production refuse piles, small campsites, and extensive workshops where chert was knapped and made into tools.

Flint Mine Hill has yielded thousands of artifacts dating to all Indian culture periods such as projectile points (including two fluted Paleo Indian points), hammer stones, quarry tools, finished and broken blades, and four amulets found near a spring at the base of the hill. The site was investigated in 1924 by archaeologist Arthur C. Parker who described it as "the most remarkable archaeological monument in the state of New York. It was literally a mountain of arrowheads!" (Parker 1925:109).

A remarkable stone pendant containing two engraved zoomorphic images was found at the site. A carved image of a snake surrounds that of a turtle on both sides of the ornament (Figure 15). A small piece at the end of the snake's tail was broken off and is missing. The pendant measures 5 centimeters (2 inches) in height and 3.8 centimeters (1½ inches) in width.

This pendant is presumably one of the four amulets that were found by a local collector on a flat terrace at the base of the hill. Parker thought deeply about the site, often describing it in glowing terms. In his contemplation about the enormous amount of broken points and blades present at the site he wrote the following (Parker 1925:124):

> The demon of failure lurked in every cranny to cause sudden fractures of a nearly completed blade and many were the specimens broken in process. To drive away this demon strange amulets were made, usually depicting a serpent devouring some animal. May it not be that the very name Coxsackie comes from ahgooks(or shooks) and aki (serpent place) from the tradition that flint was the congealed blood of the primal serpent.

Flint Mine Hill lies within the historic homeland of the Algonquian-speaking Mahican/Mohican Indians. Turtle effigy pendants are not uncommon in the Hudson River Valley. Images of snakes, however, have not been reported from this area. The image on this pendant, with the snake surrounding the turtle, suggests to me that perhaps the snake symbolized a guardian spirit to the wearer who belonged to the turtle clan. Based on its similarity to dated specimens found in New York and New Jersey, I suggest that the pendant was

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probably made and lost during the Late Woodland (Ceramic) period of Indian culture history. A large muscovite mica plaque containing an incised image of a horned serpent was found in the Town of Southampton, Suffolk County, Long Island, New York. This community is at the eastern end of the island's south fork and overlooks the Atlantic Ocean. The image depicted has three horns, legs, and a tail (Figure 16). There are also four designs that are "fish-tail" in appearance adjacent to the serpent, that perhaps reflect the serpent's watery domain. This unusual plaque is curated at the New York State Museum in Albany, New York, where the image is described as a "sea serpent monster" dating to the Woodland-Ceramic period between 2500 and 1500 years B.P.

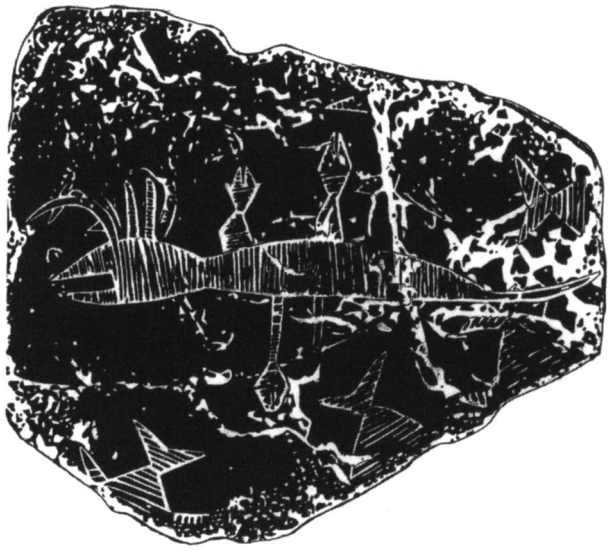

Figure 16. Mica plaque with image of a Horned Serpent found in Southampton, Long Island, New York. Drawing by T. Fitzpatrick.

Among the Lenape or Delaware Indians, the Great Horned Serpent was known as "Maxaxkuk" (Kraft 2001:316). The Great Horned Serpent was described as an evil spirit whose nemesis was the Thunder Being (Harrington 1921:29, 40). When this monster was killed, the body was dismembered and the pieces were distributed among several tribes and kept as "safeguards." Charms were made from the creature's scales, bone, or horn, and sometimes with mica. These charms, it was thought, could produce rain or heal wounds (Kraft 2001:317). An image of the Great Horned Serpent (Figure 17) was found carved over a Delaware Indian house at some time prior to 1731 (Goddard 1978:233).

Figure 17. Woodcut image of the Great Horned Serpent. After a sketch by Andrew Hesselins in 1731, reproduced in Goddard 1978: 233.

In 1972, an unusual decorated stone knife was recovered from archaeological excavations conducted at the Pahaquarra site located near the Delaware River about 12.8 kilometers (8 miles) north of the Delaware Water Gap in Warren County, New Jersey. Extensive evidence of Late Woodland (Ceramic) and Historic Contact Period occupation of the site was recovered and reported (Kraft 1976).

Archaeologist Herbert C. Kraft (1974:33) reported that the petroglyph knife was made from a flat fine-grained sandstone river pebble. The knife measured 60.2 millimeters (2.4 inches) in length, 43.6 millimeters (1.75 inches) wide, and 12.8 millimeters (0.5 inch) in maximum thickness. It was bifacially ground and has a tapered cutting edge. The obverse side of the knife contains four engraved designs, each produced by sharp, clear, V-shaped lines. The design elements include an engraved deer or elk, a star consisting of two lines crossed at right angles with four oblique lines radiating outward from the center within each quarter section, and two snakes (Figure 18).

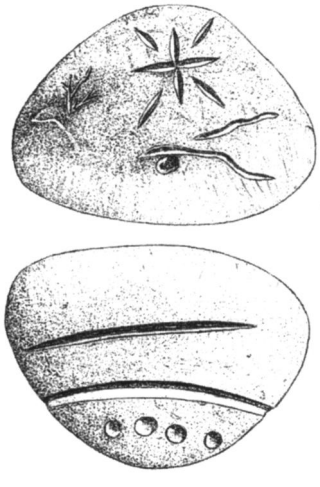

Figure 18 (right). Sandstone knife with incised images of a deer or elk, a star, and two snakes from the Pahaquarra site, Warren County, New Jersey. Top obverse side; bottom reverse side. Drawing by T. Fitzpatrick.

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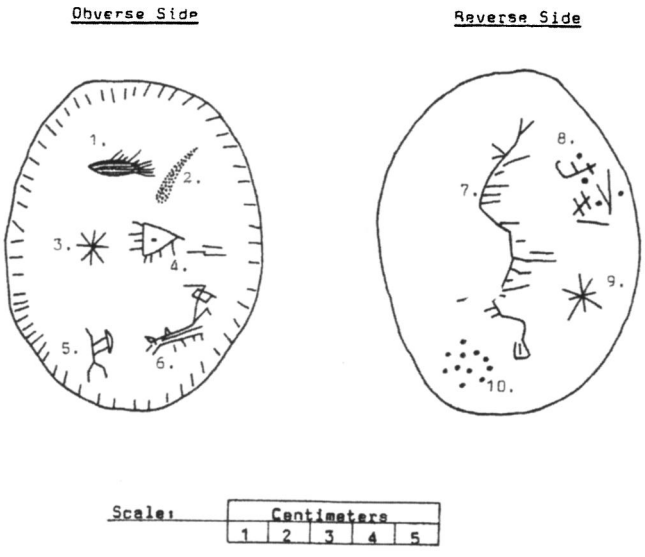

Figure 19. Decorated pebble from the Rosenkrans site, Walpack Township, Sussex County, New Jersey. Design number 7 represents a dragon or serpent. Sketch by E. J. Lenik, 1975.

There is a drilled conical pit below one of the snake figures. The reverse side of the knife contains four distinct drilled pits and the remnant of a fifth pit on the edge of the stone, and two deep incised lines across the face of the stone. Kraft speculated that the petroglyph knife may have had some magical/religious function. He attributed this artifact to the Minisink phase of the Terminal Late Woodland (Ceramic) Period.

During the summer of 1969, an avocational archaeologist conducted archaeological excavations at the Rosenkrans site which is situated on a high terrace overlooking the Delaware River in Walpack Township, Sussex County, New Jersey. Several artifacts were recovered from the site including fragments of pottery, projectile points, bone fragments, a broken pestle, and a small pebble containing incised designs. One cultural feature, a fire pit, was also found. The decorated pebble, referred to as the Rosenkrans petroglyph, is a flat, dull, charcoal-gray polished river pebble. It measures 74 millimenters (2.9 inches) in length, 57 millimeters (2.25 inches) in width, and 12 millimeters (0.5 inch) in maximum thickness. The designs on the stone are fine lines lightly and delicately incised with a very sharp tool (Figure 19). Among the images are those of a fish (#1), a comet or shooting star (#2) which was pecked into the stone, two stars (#s 3, 9), a geometric figure (#4), a headless stick-figure style anthropomorph (#5), an animal (#6), a dragon or serpent-like figure (#7), a very prominent abstract design (#8), and a cluster of eleven dots (#10) possibly representing some astronomical feature (Lenik 2002:217-219; 1977:14-16).

In my opinion, the Rosenkrans decorated pebble was possibly intended as a grave offering. With its several astronomical, human and serpent figures, it may have been intended as a passport to heaven that depicts the journey of the afterlife. Many burials have been excavated by several archaeologists at the site. These burials contained many unusual artifacts such as objects made of native copper, unusually shaped slate gorgets, pendants, boat stones, fragments of cloth, cordage, mats and a shell bead necklace (Kraft 2001:172-178). The burials date to the Middle Woodland Period, circa 2000 B.P. to 1000 B.P. The Rosenkrans petroglyph might belong to this cultural period.

In 1641 Adriaen Van der Donck came from Holland to New Amsterdam (New York) to serve as a sheriff and attorney in the employ of Kiliaen Van Rensselaer in his colony along the Hudson River. By 1645 Van der Donck had acquired extensive knowledge of the Indians in the colony. In his book, *A Description of New Netherlands*, written in 1655, he wrote that the Indians were "colouring...their faces, bodies and skins which they wear...They also paint their shields and war hammers or clubs, and in their houses on the rail work, they paint representations of canoes and animals..." (Van der Donck 1968:39).

According to ethnohistoric accounts, Indians in the Hudson River Valley and New Jersey adorned their bodies with tattoos of snakes. Maumauntisseken, who was also known as Shabash, had a snake tattooed on each cheek (Dunn 2000:228; Frazier 1992:60, 61). Another example is a portrait of the Delaware Indian Chief, Lapawinso, painted by Gustavus Hesselius in 1735 which shows a snake or serpent and two thunderbirds tattooed on his forehead (Kraft 2000:233, Figure 6.25) (Figure 20). Clearly, the snake was viewed as a powerful spirit being and this design motif continued well into the historic period of settlement in this region. Tattooing as a form of body decoration conveyed visible information about the person and their beliefs.

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Lenape or Delaware Indian myths and legends contain several accounts of snakes, a great serpent, a horned serpent, and water monsters. In one tale, "Netyogwesuk" or Little Women, who resided in cliffs at the mouth of the Delaware River would summon the great serpent to eat travelers on the river who treated them disrespectfully. Another story tells of "heros" who "captured the Horned Serpent" on the shore of the ocean "and took scales from its back" which would be used as a rain charm. A third legend speaks of hunters who came upon a huge serpent in a tree which then slid into the water of a lake. The hunters "sang" at the lake and raised the creature, burned it, and took pieces of its bone to use as medicine (Bierhorst 1995:37, 43-44, 47, 95).

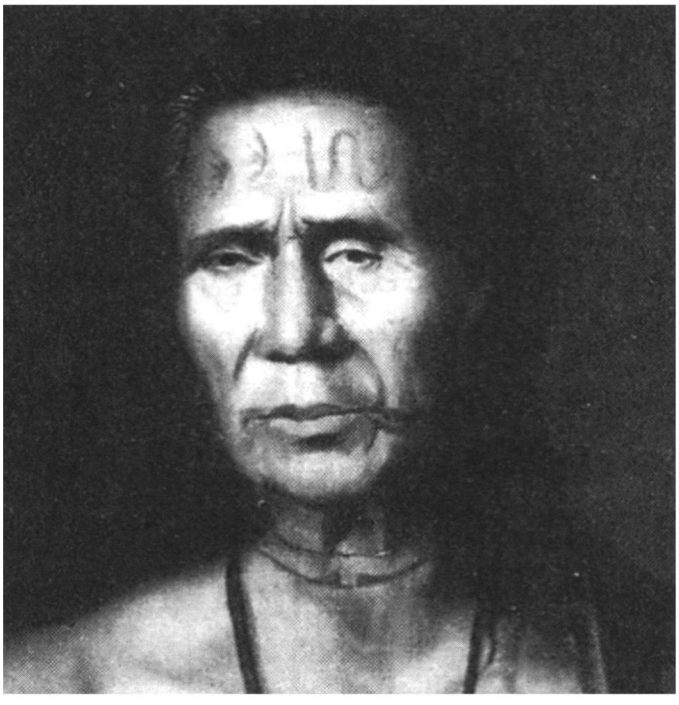

Figure 20. Lapawinso, a Lenape elder painted by Gustavus Hesselins in 1735 (closeup).

Iroquois myths and legends also speak of snakes and serpents. In a Seneca legend, a thunderbird who lived in a cave behind the cascading water of Niagara Falls battled and defeated a giant snake. As the snake's body drifted down the Niagara River, it came to the falls where it became wedged among the rocks where it formed the Horseshoe Falls (Gridley 1939:86-87; Bender 2003:4).

Figure 21. Representation of a Horned Serpent in Lake Ontario. Iroquois. Source: Converse 1908: 44.

In another Iroquois tale, Gun-no-do-yah, the son of a chief, found and challenged a horned snake monster in Lake Ontario (Figure 21). Gun-no-do-yah tried to shoot and kill the creature with his bow and arrows but was unsuccessful. One day, he was seized by the monster and taken down to the bottom of the lake. He-no, a thunderbird and mortal enemy of the serpent, sent his warriors to find the serpent. They found the monster sleeping in a deep cave under the water and brought him to He-no the thunderbird, who killed it and removed the still-living Gun-no-do-yah from its body (Converse 1908:42-45).

Split Rock, a cliff on the west side of Lake Champlain south of Essex, New York, has a "natural figure resembling a snake on the rock." There were numerous rattlesnakes there, and the Abenaki Indians refer to the rock as "rattlesnake island," and as a "rock where there are pictures" (Day 1998:256). Lake Champlain is also reportedly the underwater home of a fire dragon man-being who was seen by Mohawk (Iroquois) Indians and several of their captives who were camped near the lake around 1779 (Luckhurst 1916:26). According to twentieth century folklore, a horsehead monster called "Champ" has been sighted several times on the lake (Meurger 1988:39-40, 96).

SERPENTINE PETROGLYPHS IN THE LOWER SUSQUEHANNA RIVER

The Susquehanna River extends south from Lake Otsego in Cooperstown, New York through Pennsylvania until it enters Chesapeake Bay at Havre de Grace, Maryland, a distance of 717 kilometers (448 miles). A western branch of the river, some 384 kilometers (240 miles)

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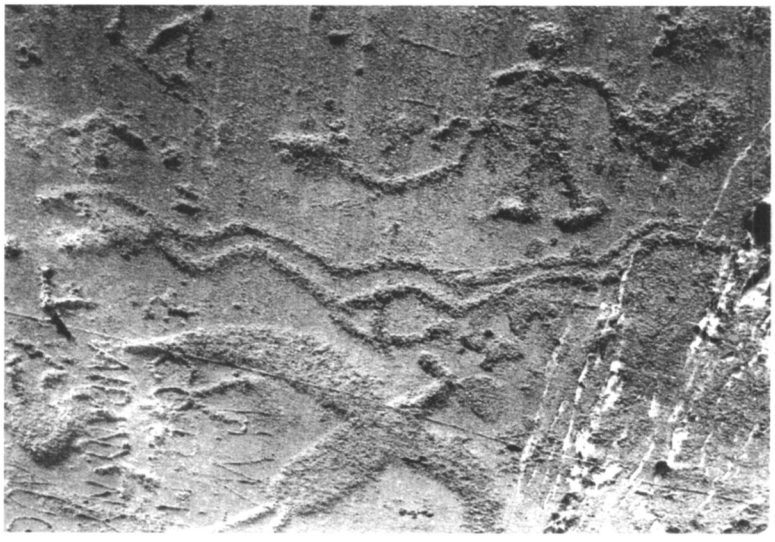

Figure 22. Pecked snake on Little Indian Rock, Safe Harbor, Pennsylvania. Length 3 feet. Photo courtesy of Paul Nevin.

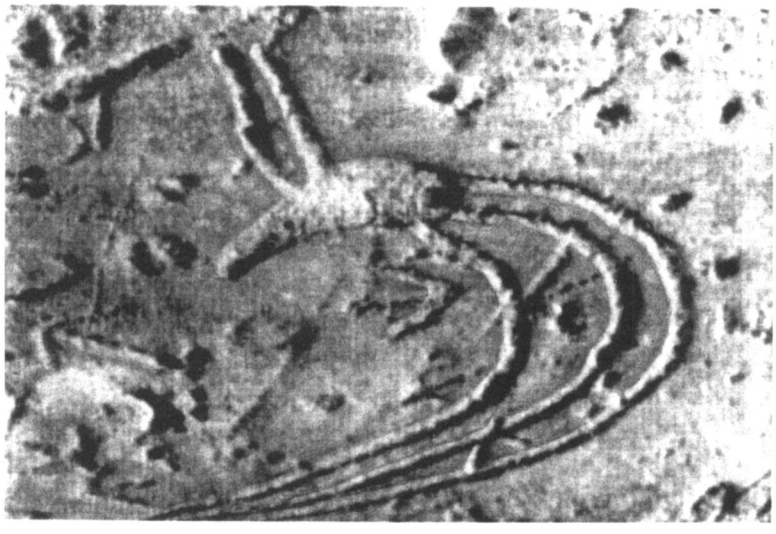

Figure 23. Horned serpent image on Little Indian Rock, Safe Harbor, Pennsylvania. Photo courtesy of Paul Nevin. Photo enhanced for clarity.

long, joins the north-south branch main stem at Northumberland, Pennsylvania (Stranahan 1993:2). Four major concentrations of rock art have been recorded by researchers on the river, on Cresswell Rock, on Walnut Island just below Washington Boro, Pennsylvania, at Safe Harbor, Pennsylvania and the other at Bald Friar, Maryland. The Cresswell Rock, Walnut Island and Bald Friar sites are now submerged below the water impounded by hydroelectric power dams. The Safe Harbor site is located on seven rock outcrops in the river just below the Safe Harbor dam.

A total of 418 petroglyphs attributed to Indians have been recorded at Safe Harbor, Pennsylvania. Among the various design motifs depicted at this site are 10 images characterized as "serpentine shapes" (Figure 22). These figures occur on four of the rocks located within the river's channel. The serpent-like designs are pecked into the rock and occur in two size ranges: 0.3 meters to 0.6 meters (1 to 2 feet) in length and 1.2 meters to 3 meters (4 to 10 feet) in length. Two of the 10 serpent figures were produced in outline form. The serpent glyphs are the largest of all the designs at Safe Harbor (Nevin 2004:249-255, Figure 14.3, Figure 14.7, Figure 14.8, Figure 14.10).

Little Indian Rock at Safe Harbor contains some 250 glyphs including seven serpentine shapes. Located near the center of the main panel of this rock is a pecked horned serpent that is surrounded by bird tracks, zoomorphic figures, cupules, and thunderbirds (Nevin 2004:250, 253). The horned serpent has distinct recognizable attributes of an underwater monster with its two large horns that extend straight up from its beak-like head and extensively curved body that suggests it has emerged from the water onto the rock (Figure 23).

Archaeologist W. Fred Kinsey, III reported that turtle and snake images appear on ornaments, pendants and pipes recovered from several Susquehannock Indian sites located along the Susquehanna River Valley. During the seventeenth century, the Susquehannocks occupied the central and eastern region of the river valley; they were culturally and linguistically related to the Iroquois of New York (Kent 1984:7-8). In his study, Kinsey described and illustrated a "well-crafted" stone pipe that was recovered from the Strickler site (36 La 3), the largest known Susquehannock village occupied from circa 1645 - 1665 A.D. located on the east bank of the Susquehanna River just north or upriver from the Safe Harbor petroglyph complex. The stone pipe has a serpent carved in relief around its bowl and stem (Kinsey 1989:82, 83 Figure 10). Effigy pipes such as this one may have been used in sacred rituals.

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In 1926, faced with the construction of the Conowingo Dam and Reservoir and the inundation of the petroglyphs at Bald Friar, Maryland, the Maryland Academy of Sciences attempted to rescue the glyphs by physically removing them from the rock outcrops in the Susquehanna River. Explosives were used in removing the glyphs, and the rock slabs and fragments were brought to Baltimore where they were stored. Among the many glyphs salvaged from the site was a large block of stone that contained a well-defined snake-like shape measuring approximately 0.9 meters (3 feet) in length (Figure 24) (Lenik 2004:299).

Figure 24. Serpentine image on a block of stone salvaged from the Bald Friar petroglyph site, Maryland. Photo by E. J. Lenik, 2001.

RETROSPECTIVE SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF SERPENTINE PETROGLYPHS

The distribution of serpentine petroglyphs on non-portable rock surfaces in the Northeast region extends from southeastern Canada through New England to the lower Susquehanna River Valley in Pennsylvania and Maryland. None, however, have been reported in New Hampshire, Connecticut, New York or New Jersey. Of the 12 sites reported in this study, 10 are located on rivers or streams and tidal bays, while two are situated in upland areas away from major water sources. In reference to their frequency, the largest concentration of serpent glyphs occurs at Kejimkujik Lake (35) in Nova Scotia and at the Peterborough site (34) in Ontario.

The number of reported portable stone artifacts containing serpentine glyphs in the Northeast region is very low. The artifacts reported here include both utilitarian and non-utilitarian specimens. I have not found any reports of serpent glyphs on artifacts recovered from sites in southeastern Canada, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, or Rhode Island.

In conclusion, the serpent maintained an important position in the art, artifacts and mythology of many northeastern Native American peoples. Bodies of water often evoked awe and fear since unknown creatures may lurk beneath the depths of lakes, rivers, streams, springs, bays, and oceans. Serpentine creatures had great power and were perceived as dangerous to humans, animals, and to travel by canoe. Serpentine petroglyphs, non-portable and portable, had a spiritual or sacred association with these reptilian creatures. For some Indians, snakes served as guardian spirits or spirit helpers.

Among Algonquian speakers, who were the principal inhabitants of the northern and northeastern regions, there were cultural variations with respect to the serpentine images but underlying this diversity, cultural unity is evident (Figure 25). Mythological creatures such as the Mishipizhim or Michipeshu (the Great Cat or Lynx) and other serpents of the Ojibwa are painted on rock surfaces at Agawa Bay, Lake Superior National Park, at Darky Lake in Ontario's Quetico Provincial Park and at other sites in southwestern Ontario (Dewdney and Kidd 1973:36, 45, 46, 50, 51, 76, 81-84, 129; Conway and Conway 1990:24). These pictographs are similar to the Great Horned Serpents found at Peterborough, Kejimkujik Lake, Mount Pinnacle in Quebec, Embden, Maine, on a portable object such as the mica plaque from Long Island, New

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York and a carving over a Delaware Indian house. Mythological and snake petroglyphs have also been reported and documented in western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio (see Swauger 1974:30, 32, 34, 37, 46, 62, 65, 71, 85, 88, plates 15, 40, 87). Finally, serpent figures are also found on Ojibwa birch bark scrolls and drawings, and on one Passamaquoddy basket. These examples represent a diverse, rich and broad artistic cultural tradition of Algonquian peoples.

Figure 25 (left). Mishipeshu and serpents painted on rocks at Agawa Bay, Lake Superior National Forest. Photo courtesy of Thor Conway.

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